DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 409 764 HE 030 238

AUTHOR	Keith, Kent M.
TITLE	Servant Leadership.
PUB DATE	3 Oct 94
NOTE	19p.; Paper presented at the Meeting of the Social Science Association (Honolulu, HI, October 3, 1994).
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Church Related Colleges; *Ethics; Higher Education; *Leadership; *Leadership Qualities; *Leadership Training; Moral Values; Religion; Service Learning; Student Leadership; Universities

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the development of Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii, and the concept of servant leadership that is stressed by the university. Chaminade University was founded in 1955 by the Society of Mary, a Catholic organization started by Father William Joseph Chaminade in 1817. One of the major purposes of the Society of Mary is to educate leaders, and both the society and the university emphasize the concept of servant leadership in the educational programs. Servant leadership is based on love and caring for all fellow beings and the desire to help them, not the accumulation of power or prestige. Servant leaders are focused on helping others and on helping society. Examples of servant leaders and servant leadership are drawn from religious and philosophical writings, history, and business. Chaminade University founded the Chaminade Leadership Institute in 1989 to provide servant leadership workshops to students, and since then the institute has grown into a program that offers workshops, academic courses, and community service projects. (MDM)

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Chaminade University of Honolulu

presented to the

Social Science Association

Honolulu, Hawaii

October 3, 1994

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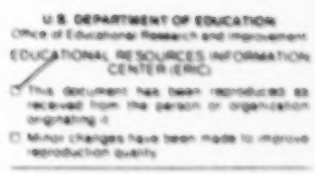
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Servant Leadership

What I would like to do this evening is to tell you a little about the history and tradition of Chaminade University, and then describe the concept of servant leadership which has become the focus of a number of our activities.

Chaminade University

Chaminade University is named for Father William Joseph Chaminade, a French Catholic priest who lived from 1761 to 1850. Father Chaminade lived through the French Revolution, with its Reign of Terror, and the wars of Napoleon. He was a courageous man of great faith. For five years he ministered to his people in secret, even though to do so was to risk death by the guillotine.

In 1817, Father Chaminade founded the Society of Mary, whose members are known as Marianists. Today, there are 111,000 students in 106 Marianist schools and universities in 30 countries. We are proud to be part of this major international educational effort.

The Marianists first came to Hawaii in 1883, and assumed the leadership of St. Louis School in Honolulu, St. Anthony's on Maui, and St. Joseph's on the Island of Hawaii. Generations of community leaders have graduated from Marianist high schools. We are proud to be part of this local tradition of educational excellence.

Chaminade University was founded in 1955 on the St. Louis School campus in Kaimuki. At any given time, we serve approximately 2,500 students in our day, evening, and graduate programs. We offer our students career preparation in a liberal arts setting, enriched by Catholic, Marianist values. Those values relate to social justice, concern for the

needs of the disadvantaged, ethics, servant leadership, the nurturing of families, and the building of communities.

These are values we try to live by. For example, in terms of our concern for the needs of the disadvantaged, more than a third of our day session students meet the federal definition for being economically disadvantaged. Two thirds of those students are not only economically disadvantaged, but are also first-generation college students. We are proud to be the breakthrough institution for these young men and women.

In terms of our emphasis on the building of community, a survey of our day session graduates indicates that more than half of them have held public service or community service jobs since graduation. We are proud to be producing graduates who are focused on giving back to the community.

One of the major purposes of the Society of Mary is to educate leaders. Let me turn now to an explanation of the concept of servant leadership, and why we think it is so important.

The meaning of life

To explain what servant leadership is, and why it is important, I start with a simple and fundamental question: What is the meaning of life? Why are we all here on this planet, anyway? For many, the answer begins with religious faith. For most, the answer either begins or continues with love. I believe that in most countries, cultures, and centuries, people have discovered that love is the meaning of life. Not power, or wealth, or fame, or sex, but love. Happy people are people who know how to give and receive love. For most

people, that is the deepest, most exhilarating meaning of life.

When we stop to think about it, we have to admit that we really do love each other. We love our parents, our spouses, our sisters and brothers, our children, our relatives, and our friends. We may not love them well, we may not love them enough, and we may not love each of them in the same way, but we love them. And because we love them, we care about them. We care about the community they live in. We care about the nation and world they live in. We care about their education and personal growth. We care about their jobs, and the quality of their environment. We want them to have whatever they need, because we love them, and we want the best for them.

The interesting thing about loving people, and wanting to help them, is that our love can grow and grow, encompassing more and more people, until it encompasses all of humankind. We begin to feel compassion for all human beings. We begin to identify with their trials and tribulations, and want to help them if we can. But how can we help?

The servant leader

Servant leadership is one way to help. A servant leader is a leader who is focused on serving others. A servant leader is aware that he or she is an instrument for good, a person who has been given certain abilities or gifts which are meant to be used in helping others. A servant leader is not worried about the attention others pay to him, but the attention he pays to others. A servant leader loves people, and wants to help them.

Servant leadership is not about power, it is about *service*. The servant leader does not go around asking, "How can I get power? How can I make people do things?" The servant

leader asks, "What do people need? How can I help them to get it? What does my organization need to do? How can I help my organization to do it?" Thus, rather than embarking on a quest for personal power, the servant leader embarks on a quest to identify and meet the needs of others.

Servant leaders have the same broad range of leadership tasks as other leaders. Servant leaders can be many different types of leader, depending on their personalities and the specific circumstances. The servant leader surveys the needs of a group and looks for what is missing. She asks herself: What type of leadership, what kind of service, will provide the missing link so that action will be possible for this group? The missing link will vary, so the servant leader does not always perform the same role or service in each case.

Servant leaders are not obsequious or servile. A servant leader can accumulate and exercise power. A servant leader can become angry and enter the fray to do battle. What is important is that the servant leader accumulates power or becomes angry *on behalf of others*. The servant leader acts in response to the way *others* are treated, not in response to the way he or she is treated. The servant leader is willing to mobilize support and take bold action on behalf of what is right.

There are times when a servant leader has to argue, or engage in conflict, or get into a fight. But there are more times when a servant leader will stop a fight, by deflecting an attack, or by absorbing the attack and going on to do what really needs to be done. People who have the strength to do this can limit the amount of conflict and pain which is suffered by the societies in which they live.

Whatever the situation, the servant leader is servant first. One of the important books in this field is Servant Leadership by Robert Greenleaf. Greenleaf makes it clear that someone who is a leader first, may want to satisfy a drive for power or for the possession of material goods. Greenleaf says:

> The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? (pp. 13-14)

Servant leadership is not a new idea. Matthew 20: 28 tells us that Christ came to serve, not to be served. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and comforted the outcast. And He made it clear that His followers are to do the same.

The concept of servant leadership can be found in other religions or philosophies as well. The Tao Te Ching consists of ancient writings attributed to Lao-Tzu, a sage who lived in China about 500 B. C. and is known as the founder of Taoism. In one passage, Lao-Tzu describes a leader who is so effective that he is almost invisible. When the great deeds are done, the people say "We did this of our free will. We did this ourselves." (Wei, 1982, p. 150)

John Heider, in The Tao of Leadership, draws his own meaning and images from this passage of the Tao Te Ching. His reflection includes the following:

> The wise leader does not intervene unnecessarily. The leader's presence is felt, but often the group runs itself...
>
> Imagine that you are a midwife; you are assisting at someone else's birth. Do

> good without show or fuss. Facilitate what is happening rather than what you think ought to be happening. If you must take the lead, lead so that the mother is helped, yet still free and in charge.
>
> When the baby is born, the mother will rightly say: 'We did it ourselves!' (p. 33)

Examples of servant leaders

There are no doubt thousands of examples of servant leadership in literature, the movies, history, and daily life today. One thinks of figures such as Father Chaminade, Father Damien, Washington, Lincoln, Clara Barton, Eichi Shibusawa, Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King, and Mother Teresa.

My guess is that most servant leaders have *not* been known outside the group or community they have served. Like Lao-Tzu's servant leader, they are almost "invisible."

An especially good example of servant leadership in literature is Watership Down by Richard Adams. This is a wonderful fable about a group of rabbits who set out to find a new home. Hazel-rah, who becomes the Chief Rabbit, is not the biggest rabbit in the group, nor the cleverest, nor the most clairvoyant. But he becomes the leader for a number of reasons. First, he is willing to listen, often asking for advice from others. Second, he knows the different strengths of the other rabbits, and draws out those strengths for the good of the group. Third, he is able to identify the needs of the group, and make decisions and take action in a way which unites the rabbits in seeking to achieve their common goals. And fourth, he is willing to pitch in, and take personal risks on behalf of the group. Hazel-rah is a servant leader in a participatory community. The rabbits face hard times, and are severely

tested, but they work together as a team, and they succeed in finding a new home.

One of the many powerful movies made by Kurosawa Akira is Ikiru, the story of Kanji Watanabe, a Japanese government bureaucrat who discovers that he is dying of cancer and has only six months to live. After wandering around the city feeling sorry for himself, he decides to make a difference before he dies. He sets out to establish a playground for a neighborhood whose children have no place to play. The mothers of the neighborhood have been referred from government agency to government agency, each bureaucrat passing the buck to the other, nobody willing to take responsibility and help them. Watanabe, a branch chief in the Citizen's Section, takes up their cause. While enduring great physical pain, he patiently and courageously confronts each obstacle until he gets the playground built. He dies late one night, sitting in one of the swings in the playground, singing softly, at peace with himself. At last his life meant something. He had helped somebody. He had made a difference.

I am impressed with the accomplishments of historical figures like Florence Nightingale, an English woman who lived from 1820 to 1910. Born into a wealthy family, her parents were horrified at her interest in nursing, because they thought that most nurses were either immoral or drunk or both. But Florence pursued her interest, gaining experience in Germany and assuming the management of a small hospital in London in 1853. When the Crimean War broke out the next year, she was asked by the British government to take a group of nurses to Russian Crimea. She arrived with 38 nurses, and found 5,000 wounded and sick men in bare buildings with no facilities. Often working 20 hours per day, she got

the hospitals equipped and made them sanitary, dramatically improving the treatment of the soldiers. After the war she published a huge book on army hospitals, and then opened a training school for nurses. Florence Nightingale saved thousands of lives, and is often considered the founder of modern nursing.

Servant leaders in business, politics, and the military

Three of the major contexts for leadership today are business, politics, and the military. I believe that the best business leaders are focused on the needs of others-- clients or customers outside the organization, and employees or colleagues inside the organization. They listen to and respond to both internal and external needs.

For the manager or leader within the organization, the question is: How can I be of service? Or in Peter Drucker's words, "What can I contribute?" Drucker, in The Effective Executive, writes:

> The effective executive focuses on contribution. He looks up from his work and outward toward goals. He asks: 'What can I contribute that will significantly affect the performance and the results of the institution I serve?'...
>
> The focus on contribution turns the executive's attention away from his own specialty, his own narrow skills, his own department, and toward the performance of the whole. It turns his attention to the outside, the only place where there are results... He therefore will also come to think in terms of the customer, the client, or the patient, who is the ultimate reason for whatever the organization produces, whether it be economic goods, governmental policies, or health services. (pp. 52-53)

Drucker, in his own way, has described the effective executive as a servant leader, focused on contribution, and focused on others.

The politician is supposed to be a public servant-- a servant leader by definition. The

fact that many, today, do not act as though they are public servants, has caused or reaffirmed a great deal of cynicism about political leaders. It is possible that if more political leaders were servant leaders, they could begin to change the image and reality of political leaders in ways that would, over time, develop a new sense of trust and respect between citizens and those whom they have elected.

One of my favorite books as a young man was Profiles in Courage, by John F. Kennedy. Kennedy describes eight U.S. Senators, each different in his own way, who made a tough decision on principle, and served the nation at great personal sacrifice. Whatever kind of leader each had been in his career up to that point, he became a servant leader when he put the good of others first. Their examples have always been inspiring to me.

Probably the last place one would expect to find servant leadership would be in the military. The word "servant" is a little harder to match up with our images of great commanders. And yet, my own reading and observations indicate that the great commanders have placed high priority on taking care of their troops. This has included not only their food, clothing, shelter, equipment, and health, but also training, and opportunities for growth and recognition. Great commanders have also identified with their troops, and have been willing to suffer what they have suffered. Alexander the Great trained with his men, and led them into battle. George Washington stayed with his beleaguered troops during the bitter winter at Valley Forge. The troops have always known if the commander cared, and great commanders have always cared.

Different focus, different motivation

Servant leaders have a different focus, and a different motivation, from most other leaders. They are focused on others, not themselves. And they are motivated not by power but by love and the desire to use their talents to help others.

The attributes or character traits of servant leaders are likely to include compassion, understanding, and selflessness. Their lifework is likely to focus on meeting the fundamental needs of others, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, jobs, and basic human rights.

This difference of focus and motivation is seen clearly when we look at famous leaders who were not servant leaders. Let's take, for example, Henry V, king of England.

I love the story of Henry V, who is said to have been "deservedly more loved by his subjects than any English king before or since" (Stephen & Lee, 1917, p. 505). Henry lived from 1387 to 1422. He first went into battle at age 13. By age 20 he was an accomplished general. At age 25 he was king; two years later he invaded northern France. That expedition is described in Shakespeare's play, Henry V, recently made into a marvelous film starring Kenneth Branagh. Near Ajincourt, the English army found itself outnumbered by three or four or five to one by the French. A fierce battle ensued. When the battle was over, there were anywhere from 7,000 to 10,000 French dead, and only 400-500 English dead. It was an incredible victory, a miracle.

Henry went on in later years to conquer France and become the Regent; he married the French king's daughter, and their son became the king of both England and France. Henry also helped to resolve the schism in the Catholic Church. Again, he was brilliant,

daring, just, and much beloved. But when he died at age 35, he left his country nearly bankrupt. He had done nothing to improve the lives of his people. He had given them national glory, but not food, clothing, shelter, education, jobs, or culture. And tens of thousands lay dead on the battlefields.

I admire Henry for his genius, skill, courage, and sizable accomplishments. But he was not a servant leader, and I believe that it is servant leaders that the world needs most today. We need more people like Gandhi, who without holding any official leadership position, led the liberation of a nation of hundreds of millions. We need more people like Eichi Shibusawa of Japan, who in the 19th century established 600 companies to create jobs, urging his nation to invest in human capital. We need people like Martin Luther King, who led a much-needed revolution in civil rights, and Mother Teresa, who has directly served tens of thousands, and has inspired many more to do the same. Today we need builders, healers, facilitators, with compassion and selfless vision, focused on the needs of others.

Relevance and meaning

I think it is obvious why servant leadership is the best kind of leadership for both the leader and the led. All other types of leadership become irrelevant to the needs of those being led, or result in the corruption of the leader himself or herself.

It is really common sense. The leader who is not focused on others, will be focused on himself or herself. But the desires or needs of the leader himself or herself may be in no way connected to the desires or needs of the rest of the organization or the rest of society. That is why it is easy for a leader like that to become irrelevant.

Also, leadership which is not servant leadership easily results in the personal corruption or unhappiness of the leader. The leader who seeks power for himself or herself can never get enough. *Never.* Power becomes a disease, a drug, a fanatic drive, an addiction. After a while, it no longer matters what the power is for-- the leader simply craves more and more of it. As the addiction grows stronger and stronger, the leader loses his values and becomes spiritually corrupt. And since the leader can never get enough power, he is never happy. The victories mean too little; the defeats mean too much. He lives a life of frustration, restlessness, dissatisfaction, even rage and self-torment.

Unfortunately, in the never-ending drive for power, the leader's ego becomes over-enlarged, and false pride, pettiness, crassness, spite, and a desire for conflict set in and take hold. The leader thus becomes an *obstacle* to the achievement of society's hopes and dreams. Believe me, the over-enlarged egos of leaders have prevented an immense amount of good from being achieved in our world.

Servant leaders achieve an immense amount of good because they are relevant-- they focus on the needs of others. And servant leaders can avoid the addiction to power, since power is not what they seek. Servant leaders also succeed because of their spiritual resources. Servant leadership provides the leader with something that power and its trappings cannot provide: Personal meaning and inner peace. This gives servant leaders a reservoir of spiritual strength to draw upon. This makes it possible for the servant leader to go on, to continue striving and serving others, no matter how difficult it may be.

The three options

When you love people, and you see that they have many needs, you only have three basic options: (1) do nothing, and ignore the needs of others-- which is an option I consider a moral failure; or (2) take advantage of people's weaknesses, cynically exploit their needs, and seek personal gain at their expense-- which is an option I consider an even worse moral failure; or (3) do the right thing, and try to meet people's needs. The third option is the servant leader option, and it is the only moral one. That is still the right option, even if you fail to achieve what you hope to achieve.

When it comes to achievement, servant leaders often see "success" in different terms than the rest of the world. It has less to do with fame, money, and power. Servant leaders may receive fame, and earn money, and gain power, but that is not the goal. They usually live by a different set of values.

One of my favorite passages in the Bible, which continues to have an impact on me, is John 17: 14-15. The concept is to be *in* the world without being *of* the world. The scene is the Last Supper, and Jesus is praying for his disciples. He says in his prayer:

> I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

We are *in* the world, and we should engage it fully, loving others, serving others, feeling joy and sorrow, working hard, growing in wisdom, growing toward the perfection that I believe God wants for each of us. But even as we are fully engaged in the world, we do not have to be *of* the world-- we do not have to base our actions on the world's values, nor judge

ourselves by the world's definitions of success. We can live by deeper values, and reaffirm more fundamental truths. We can keep our eyes on a higher heaven.

Deciding what to do

How do servant leaders decide what to do? Certainly, some of the things that servant leaders do, they do as a result of their analysis of world or local problems. But my own experience is that they are more likely to deal with issues or events that are right in front of them, directly affecting them, or their families, or their friends and neighbors. They may work on problems which they just happen to come across. This is one thing which impresses me about the story of the Good Samaritan, from Luke 10: 30-35:

> Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have."'

One thing which strikes me about this Samaritan is that he apparently did not debate with himself as to whether there might be somebody with a greater need further down the road, or on another road, or in another city. He apparently did not argue with himself as to whether he was the right man to help, or whether he had the time to help, or could afford to help, or whether somebody else should come to help instead. He didn't say this is a rural problem, outside his urban jurisdiction. He didn't say this is a seasonal issue, and the man

is out of season. No-- he saw a need, right there in front of him, and he acted.

That is what life is like each day for many servant leaders. They live each day, discovering needs and addressing them. Their biggest challenges as servant leaders may be the ones that they just happen to come across, that are right in front of them, like the man lying injured by the side of the road.

A service model

We often talk about our young people as the leaders of tomorrow. I believe it makes a difference what model of leadership they are learning today.

When I was going to school, ideas about leadership were ideas about power. Leadership was about how to accumulate and use power; how to make people do things; how to attack and win. It was about clever strategies, and *realpolitik*. It was a power model.

I am convinced now that the focus on power is the wrong focus. In a pluralistic democracy, factions can brilliantly battle factions, and great victories and defeats can occur between them, with no benefits to society. In fact, rather than healing and building, factional warfare usually results in more hurt, and more fragmentation.

The model should be service, not power. That is why we are doing more and more things at Chaminade University to explain the servant leadership concept. In 1989 we founded the Chaminade Leadership Institute and began providing workshops for our students on servant leadership. This grew into a leadership program consisting of workshops, academic courses, and community service. Those students who complete the full program can graduate with the words "with leadership distinction" attached to their diplomas.

In 1990, we were able to bring in the State Department of Education (DOE) for a joint workshop on student leadership for 150 high school student leaders and their advisors from around the State. This past Summer we held our fifth workshop on campus with the DOE. It is a three-day program, and we provide the speakers and materials for the first day. We start the day with servant leadership, move on to the nature of humankind and aspects of political and organizational leadership, and then conclude by revisiting servant leadership with an eye on the real problems that servant leaders can work on. We have now reached 750 high school student leaders in this way.

This past Spring, we taught our first for-credit academic course specifically on servant leadership. It was an inter-disciplinary capstone course, organized by Fr. Mario Pariante, our Campus Minister, and team-taught by ten instructors. The themes included ethics and leadership, the servant leader as healer, social and personal responses to hunger, and the satisfaction of a life of servant leadership.

In all these activities, we are urging students to choose the service model instead of the power model. We realize that many young people are interested in power, because they haven't had much, and would like to give it a try. To some extent, then, we are planting seeds which may take time to grow. But we believe that those seeds *will* grow, and that they will make a difference.

In closing, I leave you with this simple idea: To be an effective and relevant leader who finds personal meaning and inner peace in using his or her God-given gifts, one must be a servant leader, dedicated to making life better for others.

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